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PROFESSOR PHILLIPSON'S RESIGNATION.

"COUNCIL'S DECISION UNANIMOUS."

MR. ARTHUR RYMILL'S ATTITUDE.

When asked on Tuesday whether he had anything to say in reply to Professor Coleman Phillipson's charge of unfairness against the council of the University of Adelaide, the Vice-Chancellor (Professor W. Mitchell) said he must decline to be interviewed on the ground that it would involve the publication of the report, and he had no power nor desire to publish it. "The report," he added, "deals only with the facts of the case, and the decision of the council was unanimous."

Mr. Arthur Rymill questioned whether it is desired to comment upon Professor Phillipson's statement that he (the professor) was approached by him, and asked to coach his son, said:—"I have nothing to say in reply to the statements which have appeared as coming from Professor Coleman Phillipson, other than to state that my position would be made absolutely clear if the Council of the University would publish the report of the subcommittee, consisting of the Administrator (Mr. Justice Poole), Mr. Justice Parsons, and Mr. W. J. Isbister, K.C. In the circumstances, I think this would be the wisest course both in the interest of the University and myself."

PROFESSOR PHILLIPSON'S EXPLANATION.

The charge to which reference is made by the Vice-Chancellor and by Mr. Rymill, was contained in the following statement issued by Professor Phillipson:—"I have heard so many rumours in regard to my resignation and the committee of enquiry that it is fair to me and to the public that I should emphasize the vital point involved and leave them to judge of the drastic and unparalleled treatment that has been meted out to me. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rymill made the charge against me to the council to the effect that I was willing to coach their son, who was a backward student, at a fee of two hundred guineas. That is the crux of their charge against me. That was interwoven with all sorts of details which placed a different colour on the charge, for example, that it was I who had approached them, when it was they, in fact, who had approached me. This was corroborated by my wife, whereas the statements of each of them were not corroborated in the least. Further, they denied that I had added the proviso, 'subject to the consent of the Faculty of Law or the Council of the University.' I considered from the interpretation of clause 6 of chapter IV. of the University Calendar that I was not debarred from undertaking such work. The clause says, inter alia—'No professor shall (without the sanction of the council) give private instruction or deliver lectures to persons not being students of the University.' I took this to mean that I was only debarred from instructing or coaching non-University students."

British Ideas of Justice.

"At the enquiry I admitted at once it was true. I was willing to coach Mr. Rymill's son, subject to the approval of the council. I am assured that nothing whatever has been found against me except what I had already voluntarily and readily admitted. I ask the public, therefore, to say whether the step taken by the council is in accordance with British ideas of justice and sense of proportion—namely, to be suddenly asked to resign, especially in view of the fact that I had come here, as is known to all, with a distinguished career, and had engaged in work of the most delicate and confidential kind for the British Government, and was respected and esteemed by great numbers of people in this city, and for making a suggestion which was at most inexpedient and contained nothing whatever in it that any sane or fair-minded person would regard as dishonourable or wrongful."

In regard to the possibility of such private tuition influencing the marking of examination papers, Professor Phillipson added:—"My answer, in the first place, is that there is always an outside examiner who is entitled to see the whole of the papers, and then there is a board of examiners which considers the result of every student. Secondly, are we going to condemn a man beforehand because there is a possibility that he might do wrong, or do we wait until he has actually done a wrong, and then take steps against him? Is not the latter course the only one sanctioned by public conscience and by the dictates of commonsense and humanity, as

well as by all civilized law? Does not the law presume every man innocent until he is actually found to be guilty beyond any doubt? Is a trustee condemned because there is a possibility on his part of committing a breach of trust, or is he condemned after it has actually been established as an accomplished fact? I protest to the public of Adelaide against this drastic action. Any public board would at most have found it sufficient, say, to utter a warning that to engage in work of this kind would be inconsistent with the holding of the chair, and therefore, that the holder of the chair should choose one or the other. I emphasize again, before the whole of the people of South Australia, that the initial suggestion I made may, perhaps, have been inexpedient or an indiscretion, if you like, but surely it did not merit the application of a sledge hammer wielded in the dark."

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor.

Sir—As a friend of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Rymill, I would like to write and say that I am sure every one must admire them for the dignified stand they have taken in this unpleasant case. It must be hard indeed to keep quiet, but for the sake of the University of which we are so proud, it is better so. I have known Mr. Rymill for over 25 years, and I never knew a more straightforward man. He fears no man and will put wrong right wherever possible, but would never kick a man when he was down. I am glad Mr. and Mrs. Phillipson have enjoyed South Australia's beautiful climate, and wish them a safe trip back to their own country and continued good health. I am, sir, &c.,

"JUSTICE."

Sir—I hope the public are admiring the way Professor Coleman Phillipson is "dragging a herring across the track." The question is not what he has done or what he can do in legal work, what books he has written, or what he may write; but whether a University professor has any right to coach students for a financial consideration. The suggestion of 200 guineas makes one consider. He must have a colossal idea of his own ability to ask such a fee.

I am, sir, &c.,

AN ONLOOKER.

Sir—Knowing a little of the facts of this case I was somewhat surprised last night on a tramcar when one of the passengers remarked that he thought Professor Coleman Phillipson had been persecuted and "hounded out" by the University. The company was obviously inclined to agree with him. I could not help replying that I thought if he were behind the scenes he would not so attack the University. He then added, "Oh, you Australians are all the same; you have no time for anybody who is not an Australian." I retorted that I still called England home, although I was of the third generation in this country, and that from my experience Australians were as fair-minded and good sports as any breed in the world. "But," I added, "the question of nationality does not come into this. It is a case which strikes at the very root of the University." "Well," added my fellow passenger, "I think it is up to the University to let the public know the full strength of the case." My object in writing this letter is to impress on the University the absolute necessity for raising the veil of secrecy. The public desires to be taken into the confidence of the council. The subcommittee which conducted the enquiry was tantamount to a full Bench—and our Bench has always been beyond reproach! The subcommittee reported to the Council of the University, which subsequently took action, without disclosing the grounds on which the action was taken. Up to date our alma mater has been irreproachable. Surely she can lose nothing by telling her friends the public, as briefly as possible the facts of the present unfortunate case. I am, sir, &c.,

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PRESBYTERIANISM. — OLDEST CHURCH IN THE STATE.

The Flinders-street Presbyterian Church is the oldest Presbyterian church in the State—it dates back to 1839, just a little over two years after the foundation of South Australia. At the time of its establishment it was a branch, though not an official one, of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The first minister, the Rev. Ralph Drummond, who belonged to the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, came to South Australia on his own initiative, and founded the church. For a time the services were held in Mr. Drummond's residence, and a few very old people still remember that during the afternoon service they could hear the kettle singing in the adjoining kitchen as the hour for tea approached. As the congregation soon increased in number it was deemed desirable to have a building of their own, so a suitable site was secured and a church was built in Gouger-street, close to what is now the Central Market. The area was then a large paddock. Part of this old church still remains, but as the land in front is built upon no vestige is visible from the street.

In those days—from the forties to the sixties—Adelaide was largely a residential city, and as many families lived within easy walking distance of the church the morning services were quite as largely attended as those in the evening. The lot of a minister in those early days was not an easy one. Trams there were none, and the only means of locomotion were the cabs, which proved too expensive to all but the well-to-do. A minister, therefore, in his visitations, more frequent then than now, had chiefly to make use of Shanks's pony, or else neglect his work.

The Rev. James Lyall.

After fourteen years of strenuous and faithful service Mr. Drummond retired, owing to advancing age and physical infirmities. Then followed an interregnum of some years, a short period of which was occupied by the Rev. (later Dr.) Mereer, afterwards of Melbourne. After he resigned some delay followed, but at length a successor was found in the person of the Rev. James Lyall, who was licensed and ordained at Edinburgh in 1858 and sent out by the United Presbyterian Church as "a missionary to Australia," so vague were the ideas of the Scottish Presbyterians in regard to this country in those far-off times.

The accession of the new pastor to this, his first and only charge, marked an epoch in the history of Presbyterianism in South Australia. He succeeded to a church which had been for some years without a spiritual guide, and which had had some seasons of storm and stress. In an old minute book it is recorded that one of the office-bearers had unlawfully retained in his possession some important documents belonging to the committee of management, and it was resolved that unless the said documents were restored legal proceedings would be instituted against the offender. Fortunately wiser counsels prevailed, and no legal action was necessary. The new minister was not troubled by any such contentious episodes. He found his new flock quite amenable to his leadership. He was told, however, by one of his principal members that he must regard himself not only as the pastor of the Gouger-street United Presbyterian Church, but also of all the Presbyterians in South Australia, scattered as they undoubtedly were. That was a fairly large order, as it constituted him a kind of Presbyterian bishop, minus, however, both a bishop's authority and a bishop's emoluments. All the same, Mr. Lyall determined to carry out the policy, which was a wise one, and most of the Presbyterian Churches in the country districts are the outcome of this eminently shrewd and far-seeing policy. The churches at Port Augusta, Wallaroo, Clare, and other places had their origin in the activities of this city minister in the earlier part of his ministry of forty years.

Adelaide in the Sixties.

Adelaide in the sixties was a very different place to the city of to-day. To take one instance, Mr. Lyall lived on South-terrace, about 300 yards from the corner of West and South terraces. It was possible (indeed, it was always done) in the early sixties to walk from his house to the Gouger-street church in a direct line, passing behind St. Luke's Church and just skirting Whitmore-square. All the vacant lots one then walked through have long since been built on.

About the year 1865, as the Gouger-street congregation had grown in numbers and prosperity, it was found necessary to seek accommodation, so a contract was

entered into for the erection of the present building with a manse adjoining. These were completed in 1867, and although the new church was not opened free of debt, it was not long before this obstacle to all progress was overcome. Two of the members, the late Captain (afterwards Sir Walter) Hughes and Hon. David Murray, generously undertook to double all efforts made on the part of the rest of the congregation in the direction of extinguishing the debt. The congregation on their part responded so well that within ten years the debt was wiped out and the church has ever since remained in that enviable position.

Leader in Religious Work.

The Rev. James Lyall saw a good many changes in his ministry of forty years. Besides the oversight of a large and growing congregation, he took a leading part in many religious and philanthropic societies, which absorbed both time and energy. He was one of the founders of the Adelaide City Mission, which still operates in the western part of the city. It was from the literary society in connection with his congregation that the first movement was made which resulted in the formation of the Adelaide Y.M.C.A. He was the founder of the Adelaide Ministerial Association, the precursor of the Council of Churches, and many were the distinguished visitors whom he was able to get to address the ministers at their weekly meetings held on a Monday. There is one memorial, however, "more enduring than brass," which stands to the credit of the minister of Flinders-street Church, namely, the Adelaide University. It is not generally known, but it is a fact nevertheless, that the Rev. James Lyall was primarily responsible for the foundation of the University in the mid-seventies. It happened thus. Captain Hughes had promised the princely donation of £20,000 to found Union College, a theological seminary for the training of both Presbyterian and Congregational students. The Rev. Dr. Jefferies was on the board of the embryo college, and to him Mr. Lyall proposed that they should ask Captain Hughes (a member of his own church) if he would be willing to direct the £20,000 from its original purpose and apply it as a nucleus for the establishment of a University. The proposal was made, agreed to, and carried into effect, and that was really the first step in the foundation of the University. Mr. Lyall was censured in one quarter for having let slip such a splendid chance for the endowment of a denominational college, but with a wider sweep of vision he put the national before the denominational need, and, as far as the writer is aware, never had cause to regret the step he took on that occasion, though, as is generally the case, he received but little in the way of acknowledgment for this act of self abnegation.

Land Grows in Value.

The manse adjoining the church was the minister's residence for a period of more than ten years. By that time business was extending from the centre to the circumference, land appreciated in value, and a good offer for the block with the manse on it was made and accepted. The proceeds of this sale were used to build the lecture hall behind the church and to instal a fine organ in the church. The latter was undertaken by Messrs. Finchan and Hobday, of Melbourne. As this was their first contract in Adelaide and as they were anxious to make the most of it, the church benefited by getting a fine instrument at a fraction of profit over bare cost.

Up to the early eighties the system of seat rents had been in operation. It was then decided to make all seats free, and to depend for financial support entirely on voluntary contributions. The new system worked well, as the members more than made up by increased contributions for the loss of the seat rents, and it cannot be said with truth that the poor man is kept out of the church by being made to pay for his seat.

Forty Years of Labor.

After forty years of strenuous toil Rev. James Lyall tendered his resignation, which was accepted with genuine regret. A successor having been appointed, Mr. Lyall preached his farewell sermon in 1898 to a large and sympathetic congregation. At the farewell meeting held during the same week he was presented with an address and a purse of seven reigns, so well lined as to make all difficulties as to future ways and means vanish as if by magic. Mr. Lyall spent his closing years partly in this State and partly in Victoria, where he passed away on September 10, 1905. His remains were brought to Adelaide, where he had spent the best years of his life.

The Present Minister.

The present minister of Flinders-street Church (Rev. G. Davidson, D.D.), has occupied the pulpit for 21 years. Though in common with all other City churches, the congregation has dwindled, the services of the sanctuary have been satisfactorily maintained, and the financial position leaves little to be desired. Dr. Davidson is a man who is personally charming, and fully qualified to minister to a modern City church.

On inspecting the interior of the church recently the writer found that quite a transformation had taken place since his previous visit many years earlier. The interior had always seemed somewhat bare and was unrelieved by any brightness and the walls or elsewhere. Now there are